

## Abdoulaye Konaté: Window Commission 2011

Exhibition: 7 December 2011 – 3 January 2012

Preview and artist talk: 6 December 2011, 6:30pm

Artist Abdoulaye Konaté speaks to the street in Iniva's (Institute of International Visual Arts) fifth annual window commission this December. He reflects on the relationship in Africa between power and religion – the position of Christianity and Islam within political and cultural life. Commissioned especially for the vast window space of Rivington Place, this new 7 metre long textile work merges political commentary and traditional craftsmanship.

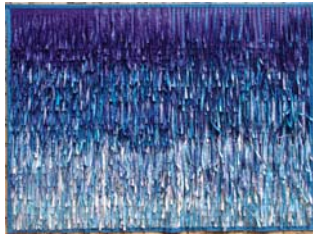
Born in Diré, Mali in 1953, Konaté lives and works in the country's capital, Bamako. Having trained as a painter, he now works with Malian cotton creating textiles and canvases in response to a lack of availability of other materials. These large expanses of fabric play host to an array of stitched and woven symbols as well as swathes of colour. In this new work he has drawn on the striking plumage of the guinea fowl as his starting point. He also draws upon its significance south of the Sahara where it appears in tales, legends, theatre and literature.

The artist's past work effectively communicates his political concerns: be it highlighting environmental issues such as de-forestation, living under dictatorship, threatened minority groups or human rights issues. His response is not one of despair, but one of hope, exploring the human condition through thoughtful and critical expression. Here Konaté is reflecting on Malian writer Massa Makan Diabaté's comment that 'the guinea fowl spreads out its colours over its plumage and man keeps them in his heart' (from *The Hairdresser of Kouta*). Konaté sees this akin to the ambiguous position heads of governments take with respect to religion.

In 2008 Konaté was nominated for the Artes Mundi Prize. Other recent exhibitions include Documenta 12, 2007 and *Africa Remix, Contemporary Art of a Continent* in 2005 at the Hayward Gallery, London.

Past artists who have created work for Rivington Place's window include Philomena Francis who used piped black treacle in her artwork *mo'lasses III* to raise questions about identity and viewing the black female body, and most recently Nilbar Güres' *Beekeeper*, a photographic composition examining representations of femininity and cultural identity.

The artist will be in conversation with writer Coline Milliard on 6 December from 6:30pm. Visit [www.rivingtonplace.org](http://www.rivingtonplace.org) or [www.iniva.org](http://www.iniva.org) for further details and to reserve your free place.



Left to right: *Symphonie bleue*, 2007, Photo: Katrin Schilling; *Le dos à l'Âme*, 2008, Photo: Jeff Morgan; *Homage aux Chasseurs du Mandé*, all images by Aboulaye Konaté, courtesy of the artist

#### Editor's notes

##### Biography

Abdoulaye Konaté was born in Diré, Mali in 1953 and lives and works in Bamako, Mali. He studied painting in Bamako, and then later in Havana, Cuba. He has received several awards and in 2002, he received the Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mali and Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres de France. He combines his work as an artist with duties as the Director of the Conservatoire for Arts & Media in Bamako.

##### Exhibitions:

In 2008 Konaté was nominated for the Artes Mundi prize. Other recent exhibitions include Documenta 12, 2007 and *Africa Remix, Contemporary Art of a Continent* in 2005 at the Hayward Gallery, London and which toured to Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo and Museum Kunst Palast, Dusseldorf.

##### Past Window Commissions

Past artists who have created work for Rivington Place's window include Philomena Francis who used piped black treacle in her artwork *mo'lasses III* to raise questions about identity and the complexities of viewing the black female body: its representation and relationship to colonial history. Yoca Muta's *Tale of Two Suns* explored folklore and man's changing relationship with nature; she went on to show in Bloomberg New Contemporaries. And Nilbar Güres' photographic composition *Beekeeper*, which subverted representations of femininity and cultural identity.

##### Listings Information

Exhibition: Abdoulaye Konaté: *Window Commission 2011*

Dates: 7 December 2011 – 3 January 2012

Preview and artist talk: from 6:30pm, 6 December

Venue: Rivington Place, London, EC2A 3BA

Window commission viewed from Rivington Street

##### Rivington Place public opening hours:

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 11am – 6pm

Late Thursdays: 11am – 9pm (last admission 8.30pm)

Saturday: 12noon – 6pm

Admission: free

Tubes: Old Street/Liverpool Street/Shoreditch High St

Rivington Place is fully accessible in all public areas

For parking & wheelchair facilities or further

information about Rivington Place contact:

+44 (0)20 7749 1240 [info@rivingtonplace.org](mailto:info@rivingtonplace.org),

[www.rivingtonplace.org](http://www.rivingtonplace.org)

##### About Iniva

Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts) explores key issues in society and politics, creating a platform for artistic debate and exchange of ideas. We work with artists, curators, creative producers and writers to promote a greater understanding of diversity in a rapidly changing world. Exhibitions, Learning projects, digital initiatives, events and research take place at Rivington Place, off-site as well as virtually ([www.iniva.org](http://www.iniva.org)) Iniva is supported by Arts Council England.

##### About Rivington Place

Opened in 2007, Rivington Place is Iniva and Autograph ABP's contemporary visual arts space and the UK's first permanent public space dedicated to global diversity issues. Designed by Adjaye Associates, the building won a RIBA award in 2008 and is the first new public gallery to be built in London for 40 years since the Hayward Gallery.

##### For further information

High resolution images and further press information can be downloaded from [www.iniva.org/press](http://www.iniva.org/press) or please contact:

Clare Roebuck, Head of Communications

[croebuck@iniva.org](mailto:croebuck@iniva.org) or tel 020 7749 1247

Sheena Balkwill, Press & Marketing Co-ordinator

[sbalkwill@iniva.org](mailto:sbalkwill@iniva.org) or tel 020 7749 1246